

**BOARD OF REGISTERED NURSING**

P O Box 944210, Sacramento, CA 94244-2100

TDD (916) 322-1700

Telephone (916) 322-3350

www.rn.ca.gov

Ruth Ann Terry, MPH, RN
Executive Officer

THE CERTIFIED NURSE-MIDWIFE

Definition of a Certified Nurse-Midwife

A certified nurse-midwife is an individual educated and licensed in the disciplines of registered nursing and nurse-midwifery who possesses evidence of certification issued by the California Board of Registered Nursing.

Scope of Practice

Certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) are providers of primary health care for women and infants. Primary care by CNMs incorporates all of the essential factors of primary care and case management that include evaluation, assessment, treatment and referral as required. CNMs are often the initial contact for the provision of integrated, accessible health care services to women, and they provide such care on a continuous and comprehensive basis by establishing a plan of management with the woman for her ongoing health care.

Nurse-midwifery practice as conducted by CNMs is the independent, comprehensive management of women's health care in a variety of settings focusing particularly on pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period, care of the infant, and the family planning and gynecological needs of women throughout the life cycle.

The certificate to practice nurse-midwifery authorizes the holder, under the supervision of a licensed physician and surgeon who has current practice or training in obstetrics, to attend cases of normal childbirth and to provide prenatal, intrapartum and post partum care, including family planning for the mother and immediate care for the newborn. All birthing complications shall be referred to the physician immediately. The practice of nurse-midwifery does not include the assisting of childbirth by any artificial, forcible, or mechanical means, nor the performance of any version. "Supervision" does not require the physical presence of the supervising physician when care is rendered by the nurse-midwife.

Legal Authority for Practice

The Legislature granted the CNM an independent scope of practice. CNMs practice in collaboration with physicians when appropriate. The degree of collaboration in this team approach depends upon the medical needs of the individual woman or infant and the practice setting. For practices and procedures which overlap the practice of nurse-

midwifery into medicine, standardized procedures must be developed and approved by the three entities of the CNM, physician and practice setting administration.

Certification

Only Registered Nurses who have been certified as CNMs by the California Board of Registered Nursing may use the title "Certified Nurse-Midwife." CNMs must be BRN certified in order to practice nurse-midwifery in California. RN licensure and CNM certification verification information may both be obtained by calling (916) 322-3350.

Effective January 1, 2000, there are three methods through which registered nurses may qualify for certification as a nurse-midwife.

- Method One
Successful completion of a nurse-midwifery academic program of study which conforms with the Board's educational standards set forth in California Code of Regulations (CCR) 1462.
- Method Two
Completion of a nurse-midwifery academic program which conforms with the Board's educational standards as set forth in the CCR 1462 but is not Board approved. In the event of deficiencies, remediation may be required.
- Method Three
Certification by a state or national organization whose standards are equivalent to those set forth in CCR 1462. The national organization recognized by the Board as equivalent to the standards is the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) Certification Council.

Furnishing

Effective July 12, 1996, CNMs (with the exception of sole practitioners) were granted authority to furnish drugs and devices incidental to the provision of family planning services, routine health care or perinatal care rendered to essentially healthy persons pursuant to a standardized procedure. The CNM must first be certified through the BRN before meeting the requirements for a furnishing number. A transmittal/prescription form is required for the pharmacist to fill the order and should contain the furnisher's name and furnishing number and the name and CA license number of the supervising physician. Furnishing of controlled substances is prohibited.

Episiotomies, Repair of Lacerations of the Perineum

Effective July 12, 1996, CNMs were authorized to perform and repair episiotomies and to repair first degree and second degree lacerations of the perineum, in a licensed acute care hospital and a licensed alternate birth center if certain conditions were met. These conditions included the supervising physician and surgeon to be credentialed to perform obstetrical care in the facility, and the CNM to perform the episiotomies pursuant to protocols developed and approved by the CNM, supervising physician, director of the obstetrics department and the interdisciplinary practices committee where applicable.

Citation and Fine

CNMs as RNs are subject to citation and fine for violations of the Nursing Practice Act (NPA). The Executive Officer, in lieu of filing an accusation against a CNM, may issue a citation which may contain an administrative fine and/or order of abatement against a CNM for any violation of law or an adopted regulation which would be grounds for discipline. The violation would not be of a severity that revocation or restriction of the RN license is necessary. An example of a violation would be using the title CNM without BRN certification. This fine could range from \$1,000 to \$2,500.

References:

NPA, B&P sections 2746.5-2746.52, CCR 1462, 1463

ACNM position statements:

CNMs as Primary Care Providers

Definition of a CNM